Woman's Board of Home Missions
of the
Presbyterian Church in the United States of America
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Laura Sunderland Memorial School,
Concord, N.C.,
December 1923.

My dear friends:

So absorbed do we become in our work that there is often danger of our forgetting that you who are making the work possible may want to know how matters go at the school and even if you are not eager to hear, we are really eager for you to know, if for no other reason than the selfish one of our need of you. I have served too many years not to know that we are in a very large measure dependent upon you for the blessings that we daily seek from the munificent Father; in this we are "workers together", and your prayers are often the key that opens up to us and our girls the banqueting room of our beloved Lord and Master.

This term we have the unusual experience of having more new workers on our teaching staff than old, and a fine, capable group they are, yet it would be serious to lose the faithful ones who have been here for years. I just called at the door of our good house-mother, Mrs. Sturgeon, and found her closing a letter written for her home missionary society; for once I really feel astute, for knowing how weary you must become of my letters, I appealed to her-for your sakes- for her letter for the scholarship friends and she very graciously granted my request, hence it is to be your privilege to see the Laura Sunderland School and its work through the eyes, or is it pen, of one who has been here only two months. I am convinced that the details that she gives will be vastly more interesting to you, than the things that may appeal to me or that I see from a different viewpoint.

"We have at Sunderland, two buildings; the new brick one has school rooms on the main floor and the second floor is a big, fine auditorium with two music rooms where the girls practice who take piano lessons. The basement is the busiest place of all for here are the dining room and kitchen, the bread room, etc. The dining room is painted a pretty cream white and the tables seat ten girls each; we have nice white mercerized table cloths and each girl is taught to use her napkin. The dishes are white with a little blue border. The teacher's table is in the same dining room but we have been taking two meals a day with the girls at their tables. The girls are growing fat, for of course regular hours and habits must be taught. We rise at six A.M., a rising bell calling every one; the breakfast bell calls all to the dining room a half hour later where the morning scripture verses are recited, both alone and in unison, and Miss Montgomery makes a morning prayer which is always very wonderful. After breakfast, each girl goes to her room and makes her cot-bed and does her part of the room work which is assigned her

by "Mother". In the largest rooms are eight cots, but most of the rooms are smaller; and some rooms have but two little beds in them. Each room has running water and electric light. I forgot to tell you about the dormitory building; it is the old, or original building, three stories with good basement, the old dining room and kitchen, which is later to be converted into a modern laundry. We have a beautiful parlor, prettily furnished and the girls' living room is also a pretty room, well furnished and has a victrola for their pleasure, also a piano, which is used for practice during practice hours. On this floor, there are besides the office, two rooms for teachers, five for girls and a big hall, and best of all, a splendid library room, with books all tabulated, and library hours each day. The girls do the work in both buildings under my instruction and I assign the work to circles for periods of six weeks. From the time breakfast is over, until chapel bell rings at eight-fifteen, is a busy time for the Sunderland household. The kitchen supervisor or cook, directs all the work in the kitchen but girls help get all the meals and make the bread, Light bread is made nearly every day. I have one girl on the bread circle who is a regular mountaineer; she has improved so much and is a perfect treasure wherever you find her. Neither her father nor mother can write, but she truly is making the most of her opportunities.

At three-fifteen P.M. school is out, when one set of girls goes to the laundry to wash, another to iron the clothes they washed the day before. This is the only place that is not modern and well equipped; each does her individual wash in a stationary tub and irons on a board with old fashioned irons heated on the funniest old stove I ever saw. It is round, with a sort of shelf or rim on which the irons are set up to heat; but with lots of coal and a great deal of punching and poking they do very good work.

Supper is at five-thirty, and of course we have dish-washing girls for each meal. After the evening meal the breakfast girls do all they can toward the preparation of the morning meal and the bread girls set the bread, so it is another busy hour until nearly seven, when all go to the auditorium for worship; and from there the girls go to the class rooms to study until nine, with a ten minute recess at eight-fifteen. Ten minutes after their dismissal from study, they are in their rooms waiting for the ringing of the silent bell when every one is quiet for seven minutes; and we teachers are expected to help the youngest and the newest girls observe this time- a time of privilege when prayer and Bible reading fill the time. There seem fewer girls who have parents than those who do not, and some cases are very pitiful indeed. The senior class has twenty three members and of course they are the choice of the school. A great many of them are planning to go to the Asheville Normal next year. It is really wonderful the outlook some of these girls have; but it is to be expected that there are some who are hard to manage and it takes much praying and lots of patience. Improvement in these, we can all see, but it is slow. The teachers have a meeting every Monday evening for prayer and counsel, then we can hear one another's experience and our own do not seem so hard".

School activities would be far from complete were no mention made of the Sabbath, the best day of all. On this morning the family are privileged to sleep a half hour longer, but at nine the house is in order, and teachers and girls (some of the former go out to teach in other Sunday schools) appear in the auditorium, dressed for church. The Sunday school hour together is a joy, for in class one knows nothing but absolute attention, and I believe interest. At ten-fifteen the line of blue frocked girlies start to Concord- a walk of nearly two miles- to the First Presbyterian church. You might see, were you present, pencils being used in a covert sort of way, as Monday's devotional hour is devoted to reports from the sermon or sermons heard. When we reach home, dinner- prepared by two girls remaining from choice, to do this work- is ready and, needless to say, enjoyed by all, for the walk is not easy, and the dinner a bit extra. The "Sunday Library", to which some of you contributed, is opened just after dinner and an hour later the event of the afternoon-quiet-time is on for two hours. I think the very least girl likes this quiet time, when there is freedom to read, sleep, write the home letters, etc. while all the house is still. After this, a walk over our hills, accompanied by a teacher, is a pleasurable event, and whets the appetite for the lunch of sandwiches and cookies or apples eaten on the lawn as a rule. Before the hour for the C.E. meetings in the two divisions, there is a reading period when all troup up to the auditorium. Only by participating in the Christian Endeavor meetings could you know how inspiring this half hour is. The teacher in charge often feels that she is the one most benefited; especially is this so in the older girls' division- dear, sincere girls with the upward look and the open heart.

This is a glimpse of our-your-work. Thank you for helping to make it possible.

Yours faithfully,

(Signed) Melissa Montgomery.

1. How many children between the ages of 5 and 21 on the Costilla?
2. How May girls between 12 and 21?

3. What public school facilities including Number of schools and no of months taught during the past year?

4. What is the total number of pupils enrolled in the Mexican school during the past year? 34. (Could have had several more had Miss B come earlier.)
5. How many children will Plaza media be apt to furnish for a school at that point?

In sending Mr. Meyer a copy of your questions I did not send him No. 4 — My numbered No. 5 as 4. — I enclose his estimate.

My opinion is that the Colo. side of the Costilla would furnish about 2/3 as many pupils as the N. M. side; — and that if Plaza media would furnish 15 girls for a Miss. school we could count on twice that No. of boys, especially if we

decided to receive boys of all ages, as has been done in this Plaza, with no dissatisfaction on the part of any of the parents, so far as I know.

On the Colo. side of Cristilla there was taught in Plaza Manganares the past school year a Public school for 4 mos. — with an average attendance I think of over 30 pupils, while in the lower Plaza there was an additional Pub. school for those pupils who were too small to walk to the school in this Plaza, and books were furnished gratis to many of the children in the lower Plaza, to all who were too poor to buy them. — These figures show at a glance the greater need of a Miss. school on the N. M. than on the Colo. side of this town, but I could never consent to have this school abandoned while the people are doing their part to keep it up. — If there is no other way to have a school in both places Miss Brengle & I have agreed to separate temporarily, she remaining here and I going above, but in view of my tendency to break down under any extra pressure I fear it would not be a very wise arrangement in the end. —